

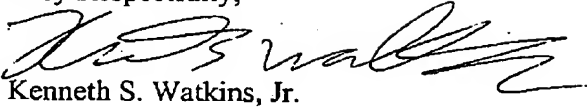
Application No. 10/506,518

REMARKS

1. The Applicant expresses his appreciation to the Examiner for the diligence shown in the examination of this application, and for the telephone interview of 3/2/08 introducing the section 312 claim amendments.
2. Reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.
4. Independent claims 1, 17, 25, 39 and 45 were amended to more particularly claim the invention and to better distinguish over the art of record. Specifically, the terminology "environmentally-induced" was added before the first occurrence of "degradation of a polymer" or "degraded condition" of the polymer or polymeric structure as appropriate. The Applicant submits that these amendments are fully supported by the specification (page 1, lines 30-31, page 2, lines 9-11, page 4, lines 10-11, and claims 14-16) as originally filed. These claims are all submitted to be patentable over the cited references because they (1) recite novel structure and thus distinguish physically over every reference (Section 102) and (2) the physical distinctions effect new and unexpected results, thereby indicating that the physical distinctions are unobvious under Section 103. Claims 32 through 38 were indicated as "cancelled" instead of "withdrawn" as suggested by the Examiner.
5. The Applicant submits that the proposed amendment better describes the claimed invention and is in the public interest. As a limitation on currently-allowed claims, it requires no additional search or examination. These claims are all submitted to be patentable over the cited references because they (1) recite novel structure and thus distinguish physically over every reference (Section 102) and (2) the physical distinctions effect new and unexpected results, thereby indicating that the physical distinctions are unobvious under Section 103. The amendments were not presented earlier because the improved language was recognized subsequent to the Notice of Allowance.

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Very Respectfully,


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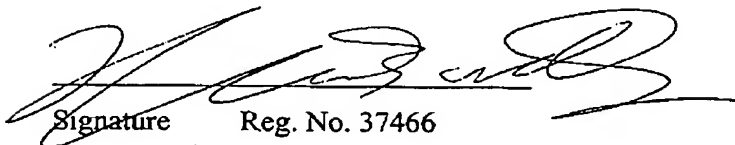
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